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## **Voluntarism, Virtuous Citizenship, and Nation-Building in late colonial and early post-colonial Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper offers a historical perspective on the concept of voluntarism in modern Africa. It does so by exploring the ways in which post-colonial states grappled with the legacies of colonial-era concepts of voluntarism, using Tanzania as a case study. It argues that the post-colonial state sought to combine two strands of colonial thinking about voluntarism in a new conception of what I term here “virtuous citizenship”. But this was a fragile construction, and the language of voluntarism could bring to light divisions in society which many would have preferred to keep hidden.*

### **Keywords**

Volunteers, nation-building, post-colonial states, citizenship, development

In Africa, as in the West, the apparently sudden rise of volunteering in recent decades has attracted attention. In the case of Africa, an emerging social science literature has shown that the retreat of the state in the 1980s led to a new role for local and international NGOs, and the appearance of the figure of both the African and the expatriate volunteer. This literature tends to focus on the novelty of the phenomenon, rarely venturing back into the past (Morris 2009: xx). It also tends to assume that the figure of the volunteer belongs to a domain of civil society, understood as existing in opposition to the state, holding the state in check (Tripp 2000; Dunn 2001: 51; Bayart 2007: 58-67). Where the social science literature does refer to the past, it is often to a “golden age” of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century volunteering in Europe and America, before voluntary initiative was forced out by the rise of new mid-twentieth-century welfare states (Hilton and McKay 2011; Deakin 1995). While the space allowed for voluntary work within society might change, the *concept* of voluntary work is often discussed in a timeless fashion, as though its meaning were unchanging over time (Taylor 2005: 122).

Alongside this body of literature is another, in which the term “voluntary” appears shrouded by scare quotes. This is the literature which has explored demands for unpaid labour made by chiefs in colonial states and later by post-colonial nation-builders, in Africa and elsewhere (Burgess 2002: 304). In the case of Tanzania, the focus of this article, the term *kazi ya kujitolea* had been used in the colonial era to translate “voluntary work” but was reworked by the post-colonial state, as Carol Scotton described in a 1965 study of Swahili political words, to mean “voluntary work in nation building” (Scotton 1965: 530) and to refer specifically to unpaid labour provided to the state.<sup>1</sup> Within this literature, the state and other polities loom large as a coercive force, and the association between voluntarism and selfless altruism fades away.

At first glance, this domain of activity seems to have little to do with contemporary

notions of volunteering. But it reminds us that the realm of the voluntary was in fact *already* a broad and contested one in colonial Tanganyika and these legacies had implications for the concept of voluntary work in the post-colonial state. This article explores the relationship between the concept of the voluntary in late colonial Tanganyika and the use of the term *kazi ya kujitolea* in the period immediately after independence. In common with the other contributions to this special issue, I am defining “voluntarism” broadly, to encompass a range of charitable and community work (Brown and Prince XXX, this volume). Here, I use contemporary newspapers, government documents and local government minutes and reports to trace the emergence of two distinctive strands of thinking about the realm of the voluntary developed in the colonial period in Tanganyika, in slight tension with each other but both tied to conceptions of duty to a wider community, whether a state, empire, or nation. One strand celebrated voluntary action as inherently virtuous and an essential part of creating a good society. The other strand, which became increasingly powerful after 1940, saw voluntary action as a means of providing services which the state otherwise could not afford to provide. Both strands were part of a wider discourse of “duty”, the importance of which to public discourse in the 1940s and 1950s has at times been neglected in favour of a focus on “rights”. The post-colonial state inherited this twin legacy, and sought to combine the two strands through the development of a conception of citizenship which linked together the virtuous aspects of colonial voluntarism with the late colonial conception of voluntary action as a means of providing social services. But it was a fragile construction, and while it could serve as a powerful mode of articulating post-colonial citizenship, it could also reveal cleavages in society which others would have preferred to keep hidden.

Through this case study, my contribution to this collection provides a historical dimension to the history of voluntarism in Africa, by making three inter-related arguments. First, this article reminds us that the domain of the voluntary and voluntary work in Africa is not new, but rather has a deep history. Second, this history is closely intertwined with the state and changing understandings of political community. As a result, understandings of voluntarism have shifted in interaction with the history of the state. Third, and following from these two points, we should remember that the definition of “voluntary work” is always contested, both in terms of the line between labour which is demanded by a state or a chief and labour which is given freely, and in terms of the line between voluntary work which replaces a service which would otherwise be paid for through taxation and voluntary work which is a virtuous act altruistically performed.

### *Voluntarism and the Colonial State*

In a recent study of the role of NGOs in contemporary Tanzania, the political scientist Tim Kelsall pointed out that when NGOs began to appear in Tanzania in large numbers from 1990, they were not an entirely new phenomenon, since they had colonial-era predecessors in the form of “professional and welfarist associations” as well as “marketing co-operatives, tribal citizens’ unions and age associations” (Kelsall 2001: 135). The late colonial period did indeed see a remarkable flourishing of such self-help organizations and voluntary groups in Tanganyika, many of which had originated in towns as ethnic associations intended to provide welfare support for those far from home (Iliffe 1979: 389-391).

This flourishing of associational life has generally been explained in terms of filling a gap. The colonial state was failing to provide the social welfare services needed both by urbanizing populations far from home and kin, and by rural populations whose lives were disrupted by labour migration and new capitalist relations of production. For Göran Hydén, “[t]he limited scope of the colonial state left Africans with an increasing number of unmet needs, especially as modernisation under colonial rule changed their habits and enhanced

their expectation. Many African associations were therefore ... formed to meet needs that the colonial state either explicitly ignored or to which it paid only scant attention” (Jennings 2008:19). At times, new welfare organizations also served as a means to engage with and to critique the colonial state in Tanganyika, though they tended to be more reticent to do so than were similar organizations in the more politically fraught environment of colonial Kenya to the north (Lewis 2001: 103).

If some Africans responded to the gaps in colonial welfare provision by creating new forms of association, particularly in towns, others relied on existing networks of kin and family. As Michael Jennings has argued, it continued to be the case throughout the colonial period that most people were supported through “informal rural networks” (Jennings 2008: 20). When voluntarism and concepts of charity have been explored for colonial Tanganyika, then, it is generally from the perspectives of, on the one hand, voluntarism filling a gap left by the colonial state and, on the other, an understanding of rural networks of support as constituting a realm untouched by the development of new civil society organizations in which pre-colonial modes of solidarity or an “economy of affection”, in Göran Hydén’s phrase, persisted (Jennings 2008: 20).

But understanding voluntarism either in terms of filling gaps in the town or of continuity untouched by colonial rule in the countryside risks understating the extent to which the colonial regime sought ideologically to remake the state and the role of the political subject within the state, and the importance which conceptions of voluntarism played in those efforts. It was not simply that the state did not have the funds to provide such services. Rather, the colonial state believed that even if funds had been available, such roles were best performed by voluntary associations, rather than by the state.

#### *Associational culture and new conceptions of citizenship*

In Tanganyika, the British colonial officials who governed Tanganyika after the First World War ruled over subjects whose existing ideas of service were in some cases in the process of being reinforced and reshaped by the expansion of Islam and Christianity. Studies of pre-colonial Tanganyika have drawn attention to the ways in which people came together to provide reciprocal labour in return for beer or food, as well as to more formal institutions such as the Sukuma societies through which young men provided labour service to others (Koponen 1988: 274-5; Gunderson 2010: 171). As Christianity and Islam spread rapidly into the interior of Tanganyika from the late nineteenth century, they offered reformulations of familiar ideas of charity and service. Felicitas Becker writes of non-elite converts to Islam that “charity” was one aspect of “what made a Muslim” (Becker 2008: 84). Across Africa, new Islamic institutions, such as the Mouride brotherhood in Senegal, placed a particular emphasis on charity as beneficial to both giver and receiver (Ilfie 1987: 197). Christianity too spread most effectively when it built on existing conceptions of morality (Smythe 1999: 137). But missionaries also brought new charitable institutions, aimed both at helping the poor and providing new welfare services (Ilfie 1987: 196).

But British colonial officials also brought a new dimension to this ideological mix and promoted a distinctive understanding of the place of voluntarism in society. They brought to Tanganyika an understanding of associational culture which drew both on the middle class philanthropic model and the self-help model which together characterised late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British society. In the 1920s and 1930s, voluntarism was a central part of British culture. As Helen McCarthy has argued, voluntary associations were understood as “schools of citizenship” as voluntarism was placed in “a Whiggish narrative of Britain’s political development and national character” (McCarthy 2011: 55). For the Conservative leader Stanley Baldwin, “all the best movements and best things” in Britain had

resulted from the “triumph of the voluntary effort” (McCarthy 2011: 55).

These understandings of the importance of associational culture and voluntarism were an important part of British national identity, but they also travelled across the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The book *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles, published in London in 1859, was read from Japan to Malaya, and many of its messages reached the Tanganyikan public sphere through the Tanganyikan Education Department’s Swahili-language monthly periodical, *Mambo Leo*.<sup>2</sup>

The pages of *Mambo Leo*, particularly from its birth in 1923 to the late 1940s, are testament to the development of a shared discourse in praise of associational culture between colonial officials and the educated elite from across Tanganyika who contributed letters, articles, and reports, notably in the section *Habari za Miji* or News from the Towns. The editorial tone of *Mambo Leo* reflected these ideas. Editors of *Mambo Leo* were quick to print news of associations formed around the territory, both in the section devoted to local news and in the letters’ pages, and intervened in those pages to praise those founding new associations.<sup>3</sup> In *Mambo Leo*, forming associations was understood not simply as a means of filling gaps left by the colonial state; rather forming an association was itself a virtuous act and a sign of a positive moral character, regardless of the type of service the association proposed to offer. In the case of the Kigoma Friendly Society, established in 1945, the founders of the new society stated their aims in the familiar terms of mutual help and affection, while a note from the editor printed below their announcement praised them for their pursuit of “cooperation” rather than division and factionalism.<sup>4</sup> Articles by both colonial officials and African readers echoed this praise of unity. In 1946 the Social Welfare Officer E.C. Baker praised “unity” as the basis of modern progress, and cited what he termed “the old proverb” that “the Lord helps those who help themselves”.<sup>5</sup>

Descriptions of new associations in the Swahili press combined a language of economic development with one praising the virtue of creating unity out of disunity.<sup>6</sup> Yet it was important that material ends did not appear to trump the pursuit of virtue. In Tanganyika’s northern neighbor, Kenya, the settler leaders of the Boy Scout Association, which attracted large numbers of African youths in the 1940s and 1950s, complained about letters they received from African youth seeking salaried opportunities which, they argued, failed to appreciate the voluntary nature of the organization. One local scout master, Peter Leo Omurunga, apparently promised potential recruits that they would gain personally from the money they raised, saying “[i]t is good for the more you bring in, the more you receive. So you see how self-supporting you can be in this movement” (Parsons 2005: 72). But the official line from the Boy Scout Association was clear – youths should not join the Boy Scouts in pursuit of material advancement. Similar complaints that the pursuit of material advancement was squeezing out virtuous action were heard in the 1950s from the churches. American Lutheran missionaries in Northern Tanganyika criticised those who were unwilling to put themselves forward for church work, preferring instead to use their education as a route to material reward, whether a salary in the Church or some form of secular work.<sup>7</sup> They hoped that their converts would instead use their education for the good of the church and offer their time without expectation of material reward.

One strand of thinking about voluntary work in the late colonial period was therefore in terms of what might be termed a concept of “virtuous citizenship” promoted by the colonial state and which chimed with an existing nexus of ideas around an ethic of service. For the colonial state, promoting new conceptions of citizenship was part of an attempt to create a new form of political society, a discourse increasingly co-opted by those arguing for self-government to prove that Tanganyika was ready to rule itself. But an alternative strand of thinking about voluntarism, particularly after 1940, saw it in terms of providing services which states felt they ought to provide, but did not have the resources to pay for themselves.

The roots of this alternative model lie in new thinking about the state and welfare which developed from 1940.

### *Welfare and the Second Colonial Occupation*

If the depression of the 1930s had suggested that coordinated action on welfare was increasingly necessary, in Britain as in Africa, it was the outbreak of war which gave states the confidence to act (Cooper 1996). Twentieth-century wars saw states make unprecedented demands on their populations, and led to further and deeper state involvement in civilian life than ever before (Harris 1990: 90-91). In Britain, public enthusiasm greeted the Beveridge Report of 1942 and all three major parties entered the 1945 election promising a National Health Service, social security, and full employment (Harris 1990: 94). Yet if the period was marked by state intervention in the economy and in society on a new scale, recent research has reminded us that the voluntary sector persisted, though in a new form.

By 1948 William Beveridge was becoming concerned that state intervention had gone too far at the expense of voluntary initiative, but in fact the post-war Labour Government was not opposed to voluntary action, though it did believe that voluntary action should take a new form and be harnessed to the welfare goals of the state. When William Beveridge's report on the voluntary sector, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* was discussed in the House of Lords, the Labour Party reminded the House that the Labour government was "convinced that voluntary associations have rendered, are rendering and must be encouraged to continue to render, great and indispensable service to the community. I hope that deliberate expression of our basic Governmental attitude will carry far and wide" (Deakin 1995: 46).

Yet while the voluntary sector remained important in Britain, it had, as José Harris has argued, been dramatically redefined since the early twentieth century. By 1950 voluntary action had become, Harris argues, "much less of an end in itself, much more of a means to an end – the end of manipulation or controlling or participating in the sphere of public provision" (Harris 1990: 114). In some cases, this relationship could suit the voluntary sector as much of the state. In Andrew J.F. Morris's study of voluntarism in mid-twentieth-century America, he shows that having failed to cope with the Great Depression, charities welcomed the opportunity to work with the state, and indeed defended it against detractors (Morris 2009: xvii-xviii).

In East Africa too, war, welfare, and state-building were closely intertwined and helped define a new set of ideas about voluntary work (Lewis 2001). The arguments of the Beveridge Report which envisaged a new blend of state intervention and voluntary action in Britain were echoed by the Colonial Office Social Welfare Advisory Committee which had been set up in 1942 on the initiative of the anthropologist Dr Audrey Richards (Lewis 2001: 42; 75). As in Britain, there was an expectation that voluntary work would play an important role in creating new welfare services. Thus a new set of ideas about voluntarism developed, in which voluntary work and community self-help served as a means of providing new social services which insufficient tax revenues made it impossible to fund otherwise.

The Colonial Office may have anticipated standardized solutions to shared colonial problems, but new colonial policies were incorporated into local settings in different ways. If in Kenya the solutions offered failed to take account of that country's tense racial politics and the lack of a shared moral community in which to function, in Tanganyika new ideas about voluntary work as nation-building intersected with and built on the associational culture which had been developing since the 1920s (Lewis 2001: 251). The "Ten-Year Development and Welfare Plan for Tanganyika," published by Tanganyika's recently established Development Commission in 1946, combined an argument that Tanganyika's state of

economic development meant that “the time has not yet arrived when it would be possible to apply modern principles of social security to the vast majority of the population of the Territory” with an argument that social welfare should in any case be carried out by those who would benefit from it rather than by state intervention (Government of Tanganyika 1946: 3). As the Report stated, the Development Commission also wished “to emphasize that social welfare is essentially a community effort and that it cannot be imposed from the outside but must be developed by the people themselves” (Government of Tanganyika 1946:3).

This document combines a language inherited from earlier forms of associational culture, in which it was argued that it was better for communities to build their own social services than to wait for assistance from outside, with a new awareness that there was a pent-up demand for social services but that tight budgets demanded innovative strategies for encouraging unpaid contributions. Colonial officials knew that they were operating within a long tradition of calling upon obligated labour. In pre-colonial Tanzania, powerful individuals could mobilize the labour of their clients and wives for production, offering protection and security in return (Sunseri 2002: 93). Describing conditions in Moshi in northeastern Tanganyika in the early German colonial period, the missionary Bruno Gutmann reported that men were required to work for between ten and twenty days for the chief, with women required to supply around half that amount, a requirement which, Gutmann noted, was heavier than it had been in pre-colonial times (Koponen 1988: 281). Forced or *corvée* labour was a feature too of colonial regimes across Africa, often justified on the basis of the public good, and often mobilized by chiefs who were able to exert both direct and indirect pressure on their subjects. Indeed, the ability which chiefs had to mobilize labour was an important element in the importance they held for colonial regimes.

As the state sought to expand its activities after 1945, they called on such notions of communal labour service provided to a chief, as we can see in an example from northeastern Tanganyika from shortly before independence. In 1959, the Pare Council in north-east Tanganyika discussed the growing pressure on local services. Education costs were constantly rising and there were pressing longer-term concerns, such as developing the water supply. A decision had been taken to increase the local rate by 10shs, but the cost of education was such that most of the increased revenue would immediately disappear into the education budget. How then might services be provided more cheaply? The Chairman of the Council discussed ways of integrating older forms of community work in the village into the structures of the local state. He suggested that the Council should consider “giving those who direct work done in the district by *Msaragambo* [communal work systems] a present or some sort of payment,” in the hope that “this will encourage the people to engage in voluntary work [*kazi ya kujitolea*].”<sup>8</sup>

This strategy of redescribing older forms of communal labour as voluntary work was replicated across Tanganyika, by colonial officials as well as by African elected representatives. In his comments on the 1959 Annual Report for Moshi District, the local Social Development Officer made the link explicit, noting that a tradition of community self-help called *kazi ya juma tatu* already existed. He continued: “this regular community effort originated as an individual’s tribute to his Chief. Today, leadership and initiative rest with the Chiefs and their Area Councils and excellent demonstrations of what can be achieved have taken place during the year.” In one chiefdom, Machame, 3000 people had worked for seven days to create a new road, and in doing so saved the over-stretched Treasury of the Chagga Council a total of £9000.<sup>9</sup> Self-help schemes, conducted by the people without payment, were thus increasingly becoming a way of funding social development projects in the late colonial state, but the legacy of earlier conceptions of association as a moral good ensured that there was a vocabulary for thinking about this labour which went beyond exploitation (Eckert

2007). As a 1954 report on communal work activities in the chiefdom of Vunjo in Moshi District stated clearly, a “good citizen” was one who put himself forward to help his country, without thinking of his own private interests.<sup>10</sup>

One of the Pare Council Chairman’s suggestions of ways to save money was that women’s labour could be mobilized, so that instead of opening new clinics across the district, female instructors could be sent round to help women and children in difficulty. More broadly, this was an era which Helen Callaway has described as that of the “feminization” of colonial service, a time when “European women came into their own, as single women and wives, in both professional and voluntary work (Callaway 1987: 244).” The wives of colonial officials had engaged in voluntary work since they began to arrive in Africa in large numbers in the interwar period, but this activity was now yoked to state policy. As plans were developed for a Provincial Development and Welfare Officer in Nyanza, Kenya, the hope was expressed that a husband and wife team might be appointed, “whose manner of living and the way they run their own homes would have great effect, good or bad, on the Africans they influence (Lewis 2001:219).” Elsewhere, women went further, calling for dual postings which would allow women to make full use of their training (Callaway 1987: 46).

Voluntary work in pursuit of community development was now more firmly integrated into state policy. Wives of colonial officers who in the interwar years had sought to play a greater role in setting up welfare programs but were held back by the strict hierarchies of colonial service in which younger wives had to follow the lead of their elders now found that the new importance attached to community development by the post-war colonial state offered the potential for greater activity (Gartrell 1984: 177; Wipper 1975).

The wives of chiefs followed colonial wives into voluntary service. On her return from Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation in London in 1954, the wife of the Paramount Chief of the Chagga gave a speech in Moshi district in northeastern Tanganyika in which she spelt out what she had learned from her visit to Europe. She described the ways in which people in Europe engaged in work, some paid and some voluntary and unpaid, to “help the poor or the sick or children who need to be helped.” This was a duty particularly incumbent on those who were better off. She called on women in Tanganyika to do the same, framing her injunction in terms of development and progress and setting out the role which women could play in bringing development to the district. Yet she also recognized existing contributions, offering “thanks and congratulations to those women amongst us who volunteer to sell tickets for associations like the Red Cross in order to raise money to help the sick. This is a good start.”<sup>11</sup>

By the late colonial period there were therefore two strands of thinking about voluntarism and voluntary work, which were in some ways complementary but also reflected different emphases. What they had in common was the concept of duty.

### *Concepts of duty in the mid-twentieth century*

The starting point of William Beveridge’s 1948 work, *Voluntary Action*, was a conception of duty (Deakin 2000: 7). The report begins with three short quotations, two from the middle of the nineteenth century and one from Beveridge’s 1942 Report, all three dealing with the balance of responsibility between the community and the individual in providing for the individual’s needs. The connection between the three extracts, Beveridge explained, was that they were “all assertions of duty, either of the community, that is to say, its leaders, or of the individual.” For Beveridge, this emphasis on duty was imperative. He continued: “[e]mphasis on duty rather than the assertion of rights presents itself to-day as the condition on which alone humanity can resume the progress in civilization which has been interrupted by two world wars and remains halted by their consequences (Deakin 2000: 14).”



The language of duty was, as José Harris has suggested, employed loosely, and there was no developed analysis of the concept (Harris 1990: 115). Yet it was perhaps the very woolliness of the concept of duty which proved attractive to mid-twentieth-century social reformers, in Britain as around the world. In a very different context, Vinay Lal has recently argued that the importance of the language of duty to the Indian nationalist leader Mohandas Gandhi has too often been forgotten (Lal 2008). In a speech in 1939, Gandhi said that true *swaraj* “comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it no one thinks of his rights (Lal 2008: 11).” As Lal points out, this point was echoed in Gandhi’s submission in response to Julius Huxley’s request for submissions to UNESCO on the subject of universal human rights. Duty was at the heart of Gandhi’s short letter to Huxley: “I learnt from my illiterate but wise mother that all rights to be deserved and preserved came from duty well done. Thus the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. From this one fundamental statement, perhaps it is easy enough to define the duties of Man and Woman and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed. Every other right can be shown to be a usurpation hardly worth fighting for (Maritain 1949: 18).”

Putting concepts of duty back into our analysis of the global history of the mid-twentieth century offers an intriguing perspective on the ways in which the meaning of membership of a political community was understood in the late colonial period, and the framework within which nationalist leaders were operating. Duty was important to late colonial conceptions of political society, but recognizing its wider importance is suggestive of why it was relatively straightforward for nationalists to translate ideas of voluntary associational life into newer understandings of duty towards the post-colonial nation.

Thus at independence, we find two legacies, to some degree in tension with each other: one in which offering oneself, volunteering, making an active contribution to the life of the community for the sake of a broader public good, is valued for its non-economic content, and another in which it serves as a means of achieving clear social and economic goals, which might otherwise be paid for by taxation and which are incorporated into the state. This legacy helps us to understand the starting point for post-colonial understandings of voluntarism and the volunteer. What we see in early post-colonial Tanzania is an attempt to bring together a conception of citizenship founded on public duty with the second aspect which developed after 1945, that of self-help and voluntary work to drive economic growth and the provision of social services in the absence of financial resources.

### *Voluntarism and the Post-Colonial State*

On 9 December 1961, the independent state of Tanganyika was born, and power passed to the nationalist party TANU and its leader, Julius Nyerere. As Tanganyika moved towards independence, Julius Nyerere took ownership of the language of self-help and “unity is strength” and made it his own. Julius Nyerere framed his ambition to rid Tanzania of poverty, ignorance, and disease in terms of a war, in which all citizens had a duty to participate (Jennings 2007: 71). A new language of nation-building stressed the bonds of solidarity that had been weakened by colonialism but would now be recaptured and employed to build the nation.

This new solidarity was founded on a principle of equality. In his 1969 novel *Village in Uhuru*, Gabriel Ruhumbika effectively captured the break with the past which this represented. On Saba Saba Day in 1962, the anniversary of the founding of TANU on 7 July 1954, two TANU dignitaries visited a rural area far from the capital. They told the assembled audience that “their nation was a democratic nation. A nation in which all people were equal. They themselves, Nyerere himself, were by no means superior to any of them” (Ruhumbika

1969: 93). Old hierarchies, TANU leaders argued, had been swept aside and all post-colonial citizens were now equal.

The Swahili term *kujitolea* took on an important role in this context of post-colonial nation-building. The term carries a sense of offering oneself and putting oneself forward, and speaks to ideas of generosity, self-sacrifice, and taking initiative, as well as volunteering. In local council minutes and letters in the early 1960s, it was used in these broad senses, often linked to the building of a newly independent nation. For example, a letter from a TANU activist calls for TANU leaders to be respected as “heroes who had sacrificed themselves” to fight for freedom for Tanganyika.<sup>12</sup>

But it was also used more specifically to describe community self-help, whereby a community would seek to fulfil a particular development goal themselves, rather than waiting for local government funding. In this vein, a speech by the District Officer Anastasios Christodoulou to the Lindi District Council shortly after independence explained that while some projects developed at the village level would be selected for funding, in other cases the “government will ask citizens to volunteer [*kujitolea*] in certain tasks”, for “relying on the government for everything is not the way to be successful.”<sup>13</sup> This was of more than local significance, for the cumulative effect of many small-scale local projects was a major contribution to the new state’s development activities, particularly for a state which lacked capital. Speaking at a United Nations meeting in Leopoldville in May 1963, Tanganyika’s Finance Minister Paul Bomani said that the value of the *kazi ya kujitolea* performed in Tanganyika in the previous year, and which ranged from roads to hospitals, airfields, schools and wells, was ten million shillings.<sup>14</sup>

It was this second, more specific sense of community self-help that led Carol Scotton in her 1965 study to gloss *kazi ya kujitolea* as “voluntary work in nation building (Scotton 1965).” The language of *kazi ya kujitolea*, and the decision to use the term *kujitolea*, was part of a wider attempt to reconceptualize the duties of citizenship by the post-colonial state. The language of good citizenship, and the figure of the *raia mwema* or good citizen, had been central to colonial efforts to construct a new conception of imperial citizenship (Hunter 2013), and altruistic service without expectation of material reward was an important element of this construction of good citizenship. But in post-colonial Tanzania, as the lines between nationalist party and state became increasingly blurred, the figure of the “good citizen” was joined by a new figure, that of the “patriotic citizen,” the *mwanaanchi*, or “child of the country.”<sup>15</sup> As Carol Scotton argued in 1965, the term *mwanaanchi* came to characterize patriotic citizenship in contrast to simple political membership. This new idea of citizenship involved the duties of active nation-building (Scotton 1965: 530) and unpaid nation-building work became a requirement of full citizenship as much as something optional. Volunteering thus became central to post-colonial citizenship.

In their analysis of post-colonial *kazi ya kujitolea*, historians of the early post-colonial state have drawn attention to the ways in which a spirit of voluntarism which was embedded both in TANU itself as a *chama* or association and in society more widely was co-opted by the state and turned into a tool of governmental power. Across Tanzania, members of the nationalist party TANU’s Youth League styled themselves as “volunteers” and in turn demanded “voluntary” efforts from others to help build the nation. Youth Leaguers were often accused of rounding up reluctant citizens and insisting they appear for communal work (Brennan 2006a: 236).

Voluntary work was a disciplinary tool in more subtle ways too. In Southern Tanzania, villagers were exhorted to undertake voluntary work projects as a practical means of bringing progress to their area. This offered an opportunity for the sort of grassroots participation in nation-building that TANU had promised but which was in practice little available, yet at the same time, as Felicitas Becker argues, the implication was that if progress

did not result this was to some degree due to villagers' own failings (Becker 2008: 232).<sup>16</sup> A contrast therefore begins to appear between the term *kazi ya kujitolea* as it was used in the colonial period and as it was used as a disciplinary tool in the post-colonial state.

But the contrasting legacies of late colonial thinking meant that the concept of the "voluntary" in post-colonial Tanzania had more traction than this narrative might suggest, and that it should not be understood purely as a tool of the party and of the state. The wider sense of giving of oneself, built on the foundations of colonial-era thinking about the concept of the voluntary which we explored in the previous section, ensured that the figure of the volunteer and the act of "voluntary work in nation building" were both ideas which could serve the ends of post-colonial state and nation-building, and a means of reflecting on and arguing the meaning and practice of post-colonial citizenship.

### *Debating kazi ya kujitolea in the local press*

To see how this operated in practice, we turn now to a series of discussions in the local newspaper *Kusare* in 1963. *Kusare* was a newspaper published in Moshi in north-eastern Tanzania, by the local council. It was thus tied to the state and served as a vehicle for explaining and promoting the rhetoric of the newly independent state, but it also had a full page devoted to letters which offer some insight into the ways in which this discourse was drawn into new and existing social conflicts.<sup>17</sup>

An article about a hospital shows how a global concept of the international volunteer intersected with the concept of *kazi ya kujitolea*. The headline read: "[t]hey have got a volunteer doctor, they will now volunteer to expand the hospital". The people of Kibosho, the site of the hospital, had agreed to perform voluntary work to help the mission to expand Kibosho's mission hospital. The hospital was run, the article continued, by a doctor called Katherine Gordon who had been working in a Government hospital in London from 1935 until she decided to come and work for a year without pay. The article described the generosity of this doctor, and praised the willingness of local citizens to volunteer themselves. This article drew on an existing discursive trope in which volunteering was a sign of virtue, though it was now firmly tied to nation-building ends. Juxtaposing the volunteer doctor who had made an individual decision to travel and work without pay with the people of Kibosho who were enjoined to offer their labour by local political authorities serves to downplay the extent to which this labour was demanded by the post-colonial state as something which citizens were required to perform and instead inserts it into a narrative of virtue.

Speeches by local officials praised the "spirit of cooperation" demonstrated by participating in self-help projects and the ways in which it demonstrated patriotism.<sup>18</sup> For post-colonial citizens, speaking out in favour of *kazi ya kujitolea* was a means of inscribing oneself in support of the new state. One correspondent to *Kusare*, Ewaldi Mareye, described *kazi za kujitolea* as a duty of citizenship, something in which all good citizens should engage. "To volunteer by doing nation-building work is important and fulfils our duties of citizenship. A good citizen is a citizen who fulfils his or her duties as is required in his country. Therefore if we volunteer to dig roads and water channels, this is a good thing because it is for our benefit."<sup>19</sup> Another correspondent praised the TANU Youth Leaguers who fought against illegal drinking, despite the insults they attracted, and continued to work without any payment. The letter expressed the hope they will continue to put themselves forward.<sup>20</sup> Mareye had no time for those who refused to volunteer on the grounds that they were too old, but were clearly not too old to spend their days drinking. The editor agreed, stating that "building the nation is everyone's responsibility" and that in this "there is no difference between rich or poor."<sup>21</sup>

Voluntary work was a particularly effective marker of virtuous citizenship, the performance of which was open to both those with and without material resources. As one letter criticizing those who failed to participate began, this work done by the citizens “helps the country to push forward towards civilization, because people develop their country through cooperation although they are paid nothing.”<sup>22</sup> Integrating *kazi ya kujitolea* into conceptualizations of citizenship therefore offered a means of creating an understanding of citizenship which dissolved class distinctions and masked generational tensions as the young could contribute as much as the old. But these attempts were only partially successful, and the question of who volunteered to build the nation and in what ways both revealed the persistence of hierarchies and also gave rise to criticism that the burden was unequally shared.

In December 1963 *Kusare* reported a meeting in the chiefdom of Mamba which had discussed how to remove the obstacles which prevented people from participating in development work and concluded that the problem had begun in colonial times when many people “thought they were better perhaps because they were of the same clan as the Chief, or a relative of the headman, while others thought themselves to be rich.” They would therefore send others to perform their duties for them. Today, though, the cleavages in society were defined not by wealth but by willingness to participate in building the nation, and on this measure the rich were failing.<sup>23</sup>

While in theory nation-building work was a means by which all members of society could perform their duties of citizenship, in practice it drew attention to the persistence of race and class cleavages which Julius Nyerere and Tanzania’s early post-colonial leadership sought to disguise. Criticism of non-participation tended to be targeted at Europeans and Asians on the one hand, and salaried Africans on the other. Those who did not participate were failing to develop their country which suggested disloyalty. One letter expressed surprise at those “white people who do not want to join with us so that we can build our new Republic.”<sup>24</sup> The racial dimension attached to discussions of communal work participation was important, as shown by James Brennan’s study of Dar es Salaam-based newspapers (Brennan 2006b: 404-408). Yet for others, reluctance to participate was seen as determined more by wealth or class than race, for failure to turn out for voluntary work was also a feature of those with salaried jobs, which increased the resentment of those seeking work.

A meeting of Kilimanjaro District Council in May 1963 heard that complaints had been received from a number of Village Development Committees that particular groups were being excused from self-help work.<sup>25</sup> It was agreed that teachers and doctors could be excused attending *kazi ya kujitolea* and instead be understood to be contributing through their work and perhaps through financial contributions, though they should still turn out in periods when they were on leave. This message was echoed in *Kusare*, where the editor insisted that financial contributions were sufficient and that it would make no sense for teachers and other public servants to leave work to perform such activities. Yet frequent reminders that everyone contributed one way or another do not seem to have quelled the perception that voluntary work was something for the young and poor.<sup>26</sup>

After independence, then, the nationalist government sought to portray voluntary work as a key attribute of virtuous citizenship in a way which challenged other social hierarchies, for the rich and the salaried often avoided voluntary work by paying cash contributions instead. But while some embraced the concept of voluntary work to build the nation, others resented the fact that it seemed to be a duty confined to the young and the poor, and that it seemed to have too much in common with obligated labour for a chief or forced labour for a colonial state. Debates over volunteering thus became a space which revealed the limits of the nationalist party’s claim to have abolished colonial and pre-colonial hierarchies and to have created a new nation of equal citizens.

## Conclusion

As we have seen in this case study, understandings of voluntary work and voluntary associations changed in interaction with changing ideas about the state. The late colonial state in Tanganyika bequeathed two legacies of thinking about voluntarism: on the one hand, voluntarism as an aspect of associational culture and self-help which was a sign of *ustaarabu* or civilization, and on the other, the idea that voluntary work was a means of providing services which the state wanted to deliver but could not afford to pay for out of general taxation.

After independence, these twin concepts were joined in a new conception of citizenship. Yet this was a fragile construction, and while the heritage of colonial arguments that giving of oneself was inherently virtuous could fairly easily be redirected towards nation-building ends, the other side of late colonial volunteering, the element of voluntary work as a form of taxation that was required of the young, poor, or otherwise disenfranchised, served to undermine its potential as a narrative of nation-building. Thus while the rhetoric of voluntarism speaks to an idea of pulling together for the greater good, arguments around volunteering also reveal tensions and divisions.

As this collection makes clear, the figure of the volunteer in contemporary Africa is heir to a long history of arguments about voluntarism and its meaning. Volunteers seem to be both everywhere and nowhere, and the meaning of what constitutes a volunteer is contested and challenged. This is as true of the Islamic teachers described by Felicitas Becker as of the volunteers in Kisumu seeking to build a professional identity and a career path as discussed by Ruth Prince. This should not surprise us. The definition of voluntarism and the moral and ethical identity of the figure of the volunteer are contested because the concept of voluntary work is closely tied to concepts of the state, the nature of political authority, and the boundaries of economic life, all of which are historical and subject to change over time. At the same time, if the concept of voluntary work implies work which is altruistic, and which offers a moral or spiritual benefit to the volunteer, rather than material reward, this ideal does not always reflect the meanings which people put upon it (Taylor 2005: 122). As the articles in this collection show, the lines between altruism and material reward, and between labour which is given freely and which is demanded by those in political authority, are very often blurred. This means that, in the past as in the present, definitions have become a sphere of argument and debate. Exploring these concepts historically, in an era when they were in flux, serves to offer an illuminating perspective on contemporary debates about the nature and the limits of voluntarism.

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<sup>1</sup> Pat Caplan translates 'kujitolea' as closer to self-help or 'doing things for oneself' (Caplan 2007: 682).

<sup>2</sup> *Mambo Leo* literally means 'Affairs of Today'. On the history of *Mambo Leo* and other colonial and post-colonial newspapers, see Martin Sturmer, *The Media History of Tanzania*, Ndanda: Ndanda Mission Press, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> The identity of the editor was not revealed in *Mambo Leo*, and editors changed regularly over the period.

<sup>4</sup> H.M. Mwamba, 'Chama cha vijana wa Kigoma', *Mambo Leo*, April 1945, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> E.C. Baker, 'Umoja wa Kale', *Mambo Leo*, February 1946, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> A.Y. Kobo na P.Z. Nhanga, 'Umoja wa Vijana', *Mambo Leo*, May 1944, p. 54; A.Y. Kobo na P.Z. Nhanga, 'Umoja wa Vijana', *Mambo Leo*, May 1944, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> E.R. Danielson, 'Ripoti ya Kanisa', Kanisa la Kilutheri la Tanganyika ya Kaskazini: Mkutano Mkuu wa Kanisa 1950, KKKKT Northern Diocese Archives, Moshi.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes za Mkutano wa Baraza Kuu la Upare, 'Hotuba ya Bwana Chairman Pare Council', Tanzania National Archives [TNA], 562/A2/14, f. 276 Appendix A, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1959.

<sup>9</sup> Social Development Officer, Moshi, 'Annual Report', TNA 5/1959, f. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Report ya Kazi ya Utawala wa Wenyeji Vunjo, 1 January 1954 to 30 June 1954, TNA 548/L5/1/2, f. 13, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> 'Mabibi na Maendeleo', *Komkya*, 1 May 1954, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from J.W. Hembera, TANU Divisional Secretary, 'Uhusiano kati ya viongozi wa TANU na Wanangwa', TNA 544/A6/30, f. 450.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of Lindi District Council, 30 March 1962, TNA 252/L5/29/3, f. 19, p.6.

<sup>14</sup> *Mwafrika*, 5 March 1963.

<sup>15</sup> Though Gérard Philippon (1970: 537) glosses the term as used in Julius Nyerere's writings more straightforwardly as simply meaning 'citizen of the country'.

<sup>16</sup> On the legacies of this understanding of 'participation' in contemporary Tanzania, see Marsland 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Issues of both *Kusare* and its predecessor, *Komkya*, are available in the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. and in the East Africana Collection, University of Dar es Salaam.

<sup>18</sup> 'Pongezi kwa V.D.C.', *Kusare*, 14 May 1966, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Ewaldi Mareye, 'Kazi za Kujenga Taifa', *Kusare*, 20 April 1963, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from S.M. Tombai, 'Pombe za Machekura Zimezidi', *Kusare*, 25 May 1963, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Mareye, Kazi za Kujenga Taifa', p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Mathew R. Mchaki, 'Kazi za Jumia Uchaggani', *Komkya*, 15 June 1960, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> 'V.D.C Mamba Kokirie Yafanya Maendeleo', *Kusare*, 28 December 1963, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from E. Uchai, 'Mataifa Yote Tujenge Taifa', *Kusare*, 4 April 1964, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Minutes of Kilimanjaro District Council, 17 May 1963, TNA 518/C50/5, f. 2, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Alex Mathey Matembelela, 'Kazi za Utawala za Jumatatu', *Kusare*, 13 October 1962, p. 3.